

Santa's back in town with inflation, inclusion on his mind



This photo shows Charles Graves dressed as Santa Claus in Austin, Texas on on Sept. 3, 2022. Graves is a rare Deaf Santa in his first year donning the red suit as a professional.

Associated Press

By LEANNE ITALIE

AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Don't look for plastic partitions or faraway benches when visiting Santa Claus this year. The jolly old elf is back, pre-pandemic style, and he's got some pressing issues on his mind.

Santa booker HireSanta.com has logged a 30% increase in demand this Christmas season over last year, after losing about 15% of its performers to retirement or death during the pandemic, said founder and head elf Mitch Allen.

He has a Santa database of several thousand with gigs at the Bloomingdale's flagship store in New York, various Marriott properties and other venues around the U.S. Most of Allen's clients have moved back to kids on laps and aren't considering COVID-19 in a major way, he said, but Santa can choose to mask up.

Another large Santa agency, Cherry Hill

Programs, is back up to pre-pandemic booking numbers for their 1,400 or so Santas working at more than 600 malls and other spots this year, said spokesperson Chris Landtroop.

"I can't even explain how excited we are to see everyone's smiles at all locations this season without anything covering up those beautiful faces," she said.

Cherry Hill Santas are also free to wear masks, Landtroop said.

Among standout Santas still keeping their distance? There will be no lap visits at the Macy's flagship store in New York's Herald Square. Santa is seated behind his desk. Some Santas who stayed home the last two years out of concern for their health have returned to the ho ho ho game, but Allen is desperately trying to refill his pipeline with new performers.

Continued on Page 2

Elliott Loonstra receives Perseverance Award in Para-Taekwondo as distinguished athlete



University of Aruba dresses in purple against gender-based violence





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Santa's back in town with inflation, inclusion on his mind

Continued from Front

Inflation has also taken a bite out of Santa. Many are older, on fixed incomes and travel long distances to don the red suit. They spend hundreds on their costumes and other accoutrements.

"We're charging the clients slightly more and we're also paying our Santas slightly more," Allen said.

Bookings for many Santas were made months in advance, and some work year-round. Allen's Santas will earn from \$5,000 to \$12,000 for the season.

A few Santas told The Associated Press they're unbothered by the cost, however. They're not in the Santa profession to make a buck but do it out of sheer joy.

Allen and other agencies are juggling more requests for inclusive Santas, such as Black, deaf and Spanish-speaking performers. Allen also has a female Santa on speed dial.

"I haven't been busted yet by the kids and, with one exception, by the parents, either," said 48-year-old Melissa Rickard, who stepped into the role in her early 20s when the Santa hired by her father's lodge fell ill.

"To have a child not be able to tell I'm a woman in one sense is the ultimate compliment because it means I'm doing Santa justice. It cracks my husband up," added Rickard, who lives outside Little Rock, Arkansas. "I know there are more of us out there."

By mid-November, Rickard had more than 100 gigs lined up, through Hire Santa and other means.

"A lot of it is word of mouth," she said. "It's 'Hey, have you seen the female Santa?'"

Rickard charges roughly \$175 an hour as Santa, depending on the job, and donates all but her fuel money to charity. And her beard? Yak hair.

Eric Elliott's carefully tended white beard is the real deal. He and his Mrs. Claus, wife Moeisha Elliott, went pro this year after first tak-



Santa Claus waves from atop a float along 6th Avenue during the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, Thursday, Nov. 24, 2022, in New York.

Associated Press

ing on the roles as volunteers in 2007. Both are retired military.

They spent weeks in formal Claus training. Among the skills they picked up was American Sign Language and other ways to accommodate people with disabilities.

Their work has included trips into disaster zones with the Texas-based nonprofit Lone Star Santas to lend a little cheer.

The Elliotts, who are Black, say breaking into the top tier of Santas as first-time pros and Clauses of color hasn't been easy. For some people, Eric said, "We understand that we're not the Santa for you."

The Santa Experience at Mall of America in Bloomington, Minnesota, is staffing up with six Saint Nicks, including two who are Black and its first Asian Santa. Visits in Spanish and Cantonese are provided.

Working smaller jobs, including house visits, the Elliotts have seen how rising prices have hit some peo-

ple hard. They've lowered their rates at times when they sense that people are struggling.

"People are having issues just eating, but they don't want to miss out on the experience," Eric said. Sometimes, he said, "You'll meet them and be like, 'You go ahead and hold on to that. I know you worked hard for that.'"

For other clients, the Elliotts charge anywhere from \$150 to \$300 an hour.

Charles Graves, a rare, professional deaf Santa in New Braunfels, Texas, said through an interpreter that he was inspired to grow his beard and put on the suit in part by awkward encounters with hearing Santas as a child.

"As a child, I was very excited to receive a gift, but then you just kind of go away and you're like, there's no connection there. Children look at me now and they're like, wow, you know, there's a connection there with the deaf culture. And I can always

connect with the hearing kids as well," said Graves, a spry Santa at 52.

Graves, who has a day job at a school for deaf children, also received training to be Santa. He works as Santa with interpreters. Breaking in has been difficult and expensive, he says, but "this is something really, really important to me."

By mid-November, he had more than a dozen gigs, including a parade in Santa Paula, California, a mall in Austin, Texas, and at Morgan's Wonderland, a nonprofit accessible theme park in San Antonio. He's also doing some Zoom visits.

Among Santa's rising costs this year are his duds. The price of suits, from custom to ready-to-wear, is up about 25%, said 72-year-old Stephen Arnold, a longtime Santa who heads the more than 2,000-strong International Brotherhood of Real Bearded Santas.

"Most of the performers I know are raising their rates,

mostly due to the costs of transportation, accommodation and materials," he said. "Personally, I'm raising my rates a bit for new clients but I'm holding prices this year for my repeat gigs."

Arnold, who's in Memphis, Tennessee, charges \$250 to \$350 an hour. Others in his organization, depending on location and experience, charge anywhere from \$100 to \$500 an hour, the latter in big cities like Los Angeles. Some, he said, don't know their worth and lowball it at \$50 or \$75 an hour.

As for the pandemic, Arnold hasn't heard a word about it from his clients, compared to last year and 2020, when he worked inside a snow globe. The Santas he knows seem unflustered.

"I'm surprised how few people are concerned about it," Arnold said. "I visit my wife twice a day in a nursing facility. I'm diabetic. I mean, most of us are old fat men." □

Hawaii's Mauna Loa starts to erupt, sending ash nearby

By CALEB JONES

Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — The world's largest active volcano spewed some ash and lava Monday and officials said that Mauna Loa wasn't threatening communities on Hawaii's Big Island but people should be prepared for worse.

The U.S. Geological Survey warned the island's 200,000 residents that an eruption "can be very dynamic, and the location and advance of lava flows can change rapidly."

The eruption began late Sunday night in the volcano on the Big Island following a series of fairly large earthquakes, said Ken Hon, the scientist-in-charge at the Hawaiian Volcano Observatory.

There's been a surge of development on the Big Island in recent decades — its population has more than doubled to 200,000 from 92,000 in 1980 — and many newer residents weren't around when Mauna Loa last erupted 38 years ago. Most of the people on the island live in the city of Kailua-Kona to the west of the volcano, which has about 23,000 people, and Hilo to the east, with about 45,000. Officials were most worried about several subdivisions



In this aerial photo released by the U.S. Geological Survey, the Mauna Loa volcano is seen erupting from vents on the Northeast Rift Zone on the Big Island of Hawaii, Monday, Nov. 28, 2022.

Associated Press

about 30 miles to the south of the volcano, which are home to about 5,000 people.

A time-lapse video of the eruption from overnight showed lava lighting up one area, moving across it like waves on the ocean. The U.S. Geological Survey said that the eruption had migrated to a rift zone — a place where the mountain rock is cracked and relatively weak — making it easier for magma to emerge.

An eruption from the zone could send lava toward the county seat of Hilo or other towns in East Hawaii but it could take lava weeks or months to reach populated areas.

"We don't want to try and second-guess the volcano," Hon said. "We have to let it actually show us what it's going to do and then we inform people of what is happening ASAP."

Hawaii County Civil Defense announced that it had opened shelters be-

cause it had reports of people evacuating from along the coast on their own initiative.

The average Mauna Loa eruption is not typically prolonged, lasting a couple of weeks, Hon said.

"Typically, Mauna Loa eruptions start off with the heaviest volume first," Hon said. "After a few days, it starts to calm down a little bit." The USGS warned residents at risk from Mauna Loa lava flows to review their eruption preparations.

Scientists had been on alert because of a recent spike in earthquakes at the summit of the volcano, which last erupted in 1984.

"At this time, it's not a time to be alarmed," Big Island Mayor Mitch Roth said.

Portions of the Big Island were under an ashfall advisory issued by the National Weather Service in Honolulu, which said up to a quarter-inch (0.6 centimeters) of ash could accumulate in some areas.

Mauna Loa is one of five volcanoes that together make up the Big Island of Hawaii, which is the southernmost island in the Hawaiian archipelago.

Mauna Loa, rising 13,679 feet (4,169 meters) above sea level, is the much larger neighbor of Kilauea, which erupted in a residential neighborhood and destroyed 700 homes in 2018. Some of its slopes are much steeper than Kilauea's, so lava can flow much faster when it erupts.

During a 1950 eruption, the mountain's lava traveled 15 miles (24 kilometers) to the ocean in fewer than three hours.

Tourism is Hawaii's economic engine but Roth predicted few problems for those on vacation during the eruption. □

Biden boosts U.S. effort to stem sexual violence in war zones

By HOPE YEN

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is strengthening U.S. policy aimed at stemming sexual violence in war conflict zones, elevating the problem — increasingly documented in Ukraine and elsewhere — to the level of a possible serious human rights abuse that triggers sanctions and other actions against foreign perpetrators.

Biden on Monday signed a presidential memorandum that seeks to combat the use of rape by both foreign governments and individuals as a weapon of war.

The memorandum directs for the first time that the State and Treasury departments and other agencies

give equal consideration of acts of sexual violence to other serious human rights abuses in leveraging sanctions and other punishment against foreign actors.

Currently, U.S. policy allows for the imposition of sanctions for conflict-related sexual violence, but it is not commonly used.

Biden's action comes when the United Nations has warned that sexual violence in Ukraine, especially against women and girls, remains prevalent and underreported. U.S. Ambassador Linda Thomas Greenfield has previously cited "a mountain of credible reports of atrocities committed by Russia's forces against civilians," including "horrific accounts of sexual

violence." The Biden administration on Monday pointed to a proliferation of sexual violence cases in Ukraine, Ethiopia and elsewhere. It cited a U.N. report that found 3,293 verified sexual violence cases in 2021 across 18 countries, an increase of about 800 compared with the previous year. The U.N. has estimated that for each rape reported in connection with a conflict, about 10 to 20 cases go undocumented. The administration had previously pledged \$400,000 in addition to its annual contribution of \$1.75 million to the Office of the U.N. Special Representative to the Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. The State



President Joe Biden speaks during the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment meeting at the G20 summit, Nov. 15, 2022, in Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia.

Associated Press

Department plans an added investment of \$5.5 million over the next two years to civil society projects and survivor groups seeking sex-

ual violence accountability and will expand programs to help survivors and investigate and document acts of such violence. □

Census Bureau chief defends new privacy tool against critics

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER**

Associated Press

The U.S. Census Bureau's chief is defending a new tool meant to protect the privacy of people participating in the statistical agency's questionnaires against calls to abandon it by prominent researchers who claim it jeopardizes the usefulness of numbers that are the foundation of the nation's data infrastructure.

The tool known as differential privacy "was selected as the best solution available" against efforts by outside groups or individuals to piece together the identities of participants in the bureau's censuses and surveys by using third-party data and powerful computers, U.S. Census Bureau Director Robert Santos said in a letter last week. Concerns about privacy have grown in recent years as cyberattacks and threats of personal data being used for the wrong reasons have become more commonplace.

Several prominent state demographers and academic researchers had asked the statistical agency in August to abandon using differential privacy on



Then-Census Bureau Director nominee Robert Santos, testifies before the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs committee, July 15, 2021, on Capitol Hill in Washington.

Associated Press

future annual population estimates, which are used in the distribution of \$1.5 trillion in federal funding each year, and future releases of American Community Survey data, which provide the most comprehensive information on how people live in the U.S.

The demographers and researchers said the application of the privacy method for the first time on 2020 census data had

delayed their release and created inaccuracies in the numbers used to determine political power and distribute federal funds. The researchers said in their letter that there were thousands of small jurisdictions throughout the U.S. that won't get usable data because of the algorithms applied to the numbers to protect confidentiality.

By continuing to use the differential privacy algorithms,

"the Census Bureau risks failing its responsibilities as a federal statistical agency to provide relevant, accurate, timely, and credible information for the public good," the researchers and demographers said. "In fact, the experience of the last few years has undermined user trust in the Census Bureau."

Differential privacy algorithms add intentional errors to data to obscure

the identity of any given participant and is most noticeable at the smallest geographies, such as census blocks. Data used for determining how many congressional seats each state gets and for redrawing political districts were released last year, but more detailed figures from the 2020 census won't be made public until next year, almost three years after they were collected.

Some bias using the privacy tool "was inevitable from a purely mathematical perspective," but bureau statisticians have worked to minimize it, and delays were caused by the pandemic, which pushed back a series of releases of the 2020 census data, Santos said.

Meanwhile, the bureau's watchdog agency said in a report last week that the statistical agency had failed to stop simulated cyberattacks it had conducted as part of a covert operation to test the bureau's cybersecurity vulnerabilities.

The Census Bureau said in a response to the report that the exercise had allowed it to improve its cyber defenses. □

Water boil order issued for more than 2 million in Houston

HOUSTON (AP) — More than 2 million people in the Houston area were under a boil order notice Monday after a power outage at a purification plant caused

water pressure to drop, and the mayor of the nation's fourth-largest city ordered a full review of the system. The notice tells customers to boil water before it's

used for cooking, bathing or drinking. Multiple Houston area public and private schools, as well as some local colleges, were closed Monday as a result of the notice, while others made adjustments to provide affected campuses with bottled water and sanitizer.

The notice was issued Sunday, hours after two transformers failed, causing power outages at the water plant, Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner said at a press conference Monday. There was no indication the water system had been contaminated.

Water quality testing was underway, Turner said. He said he expects the notice to be lifted by early Tuesday at the latest, once

the state's environmental agency gives an all-clear after analyzing test results. According to Turner, the city issued a notice, which affects all of Houston and multiple adjacent areas, in an "abundance of caution" after the two transformers a main one and its backup "uniquely and coincidentally" failed. The problem affected the plant's ability to treat water and pump water into the transmission system, resulting in low water pressure. The power system at the water plant undergoes regular maintenance, Turner said, but he did not give a timeline for how often. The mayor said he has ordered a diagnostic review of the system to understand how

this was possible and how it can be prevented. He said because the issue was within the plant's system, backup power generators would not have made a difference.

Sixteen sensors marked dips under the minimum pressure levels required by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality 14 of them for only 2 minutes and two of them for nearly 30 minutes, Turner said.

Untreated groundwater can enter a water system through cracked pipes when water pressure drops. Customers are told to boil water to kill bacteria that could be harmful.

"We are optimistic the results will come back clean," Turner said. □



John Beezley, of Bonham, buys cases of water after learning that a boil water notice was issued for the entire city of Houston on Sunday, Nov. 27, 2022, at Walmart on S. Post Oak Road in Houston.

Associated Press

14 years later, NATO is set to renew its vow to Ukraine

By **LORNE COOK** and
STEPHEN MCGRATH

Associated Press

BUCHAREST (AP) — NATO returns on Tuesday to the scene of one of its most controversial decisions, intent on repeating its vow that Ukraine now suffering through the 10th month of a war against Russia will join the world's biggest military alliance one day.

NATO foreign ministers will gather for two days at the Palace of the Parliament in the Romanian capital Bucharest. It was there in April 2008 that U.S. President George W. Bush persuaded his allies to open NATO's door to Ukraine and Georgia, over vehement Russian objections. "NATO welcomes Ukraine's and Georgia's Euro-Atlantic aspirations for membership in NATO. We agreed today that these countries will become members of NATO," the leaders said in a statement. Russian President Vladimir Putin, who was at the summit, described this as "a direct threat" to Russia's security.

About four months later, Russian forces invaded Georgia. Some experts describe the decision in Bucharest as a massive error that left Russia feeling cornered by a seemingly ever-expanding NATO. NATO



Ukraine's President Viktor Yushchenko talks with US President George W. Bush, at the NATO Summit conference in Bucharest, Thursday April 3, 2008.

counters that it doesn't pressgang countries into joining, and that some requested membership to seek protection from Russia as Finland and Sweden are doing now. More than 14 years on, NATO will pledge this week to support Ukraine long-term as it defends itself against Russian aerial, missile and ground attacks many of which have struck power grids and other civilian infrastructure, depriving millions of people of electricity and heating.

In a press conference Monday in Bucharest after a

meeting with Romania's President Klaus Iohannis, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg highlighted the importance of investing in defense "as we face our greatest security crisis in a generation."

"We cannot let Putin win," he said. "This would show authoritarian leaders around the world that they can achieve their goals by using military force and make the world a more dangerous place for all of us. It is in our own security interests to support Ukraine." Stoltenberg

noted Russia's recent bombardment of Ukraine's energy infrastructure, saying Putin "is trying to use winter as a weapon of war against Ukraine" and that "we need to be prepared for more attacks." North Macedonia and Montenegro have joined the U.S.-led alliance in recent years. With this, Stoltenberg said last week before travelling to Bucharest, "we have demonstrated that NATO's door is open and that it is for NATO allies and aspirant countries to decide on membership. This is also the

message to Ukraine."

This gathering in Bucharest is likely to see NATO make fresh pledges of non-lethal support to Ukraine: fuel, electricity generators, medical supplies, winter equipment and drone jamming devices. Individual allies are also likely to announce fresh supplies of military equipment for Ukraine chiefly the air defense systems that Kyiv so desperately seeks to protect its skies. NATO as an organization will not offer such supplies, to avoid being dragged into a wider war with nuclear-armed Russia. But the ministers, along with their Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba, will also look further afield. "Over the longer term we will help Ukraine transition from Soviet-era equipment to modern NATO standards, doctrine and training," Stoltenberg said last week. This will not only improve Ukraine's armed forces and help them to better integrate, it will also meet some of the conditions for membership. That said, Ukraine will not join NATO anytime soon. With the Crimean Peninsula annexed, and Russian troops and pro-Moscow separatists holding parts of the south and east, it's not clear what Ukraine's borders would even look like. □

Associated Press

Riots in Belgium, Netherlands after Morocco win at World Cup

By **RAF CASERT**

Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Riots broke out in several Belgian and Dutch cities after Morocco's 2-0 upset win over Belgium at the World Cup Sunday.

Police detained about a dozen people after they deployed water cannons and fire tear gas to disperse crowds in Brussels and eight more in the Northern city of Antwerp. Two police officials were injured in the Dutch port city of Rotterdam.

By late evening Sunday, an uneasy calm had returned to most of the cities involved.

Dozens of rioters overturned and torched cars, set electric scooters on fire and pelted cars with bricks.

Police moved in after one person suffered facial injuries, said Brussels police spokeswoman Ilse Van de Keere.

Brussels mayor Philippe Close urged people to stay away from the city center and said authorities were doing their utmost to keep order in the streets. Even subway and tram traffic had to be interrupted on police orders.

"Those are not fans, they are rioters. Moroccan fans are there to celebrate,"

Close said.

There were also disturbances in the city of Antwerp and Liege.

"Sad to see how a few individuals abuse a situation to run amok," said Interior Minister Annelies Verlinden.

Police in the neighboring Netherlands said violence erupted in the port city of Rotterdam, with riot officers attempting to break up a group of 500 soccer supporters who pelted police with fireworks and glass.

Media reported unrest in the capital Amsterdam and The Hague. Morocco's victory was a major



Police cars drive through a main boulevard in Brussels, Sunday, Nov. 27, 2022, as violence broke out during and after Morocco's 2-0 win over Belgium at the World Cup.

Associated Press

upset at the World Cup and was enthusiastically celebrated by fans with

Moroccan immigrant roots in many Belgian and Dutch cities. □

Iranian general acknowledges over 300 dead in unrest

By The Associated Press
DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — An Iranian general on Monday acknowledged that more than 300 people have been killed in the unrest surrounding nationwide protests, giving the first official word on casualties in two months. That estimate is considerably lower than the toll reported by Human Rights Activists in Iran, a U.S.-based group that has been closely tracking the protests since they erupted after the Sept. 16 death of a young woman being held by the country's morality police. The activist group says 451 protesters and 60 security forces have been killed since the start of the unrest and that more than 18,000 people have been detained. The protests were sparked by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, who was detained for allegedly violating the Islamic Republic's strict dress code. They quickly escalated into calls for the overthrow of Iran's theocracy and pose one of the most serious challenges to the ruling clerics since the 1979 revolution that brought them to power. Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh,



In this picture released by the official website of the office of the Iranian supreme leader, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei speaks during a meeting with a group of Basij paramilitary force in Tehran, Iran, Nov. 26, 2022.

the commander of the aerospace division of the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, was quoted by a website close to the Guard as saying that more than 300 people have been killed, including "martyrs," an apparent reference to security forces. He also suggested that many of those killed were ordinary Iranians not involved in the protests. He did not provide an ex-

act figure or say where his estimate came from. Authorities have heavily restricted media coverage of the protests. State-linked media have not reported an overall toll and have largely focused on attacks on security forces, which officials blame on shadowy militant and separatist groups. Hajizadeh reiterated the official claim that the protests have been fomented

by Iran's enemies, including Western countries and Saudi Arabia, without providing evidence. The protesters say they are fed up after decades of social and political repression, and deny having any foreign agenda. The protests have spread across the country and drawn support from artists, athletes and other public figures. The unrest has even cast

a shadow over the World Cup, with some Iranians actively rooting against their own national team because they see it as being linked to the government. The niece of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei recently called on people to pressure their governments to cut ties with Tehran over its violent suppression of the demonstrations. In a video posted online by her France-based brother, Farideh Moradkhani urged "conscientious people of the world" to support Iranian protesters. The video was shared online this week after Moradkhani's reported arrest on Nov. 23, according to the activist group. Moradkhani is a long-time activist whose late father was an opposition figure married to Khamenei's sister and is the closest member of the supreme leader's family to be arrested. "I ask the conscientious people of the world to stand by us and ask their governments not to react with empty words and slogans but with real action and stop any dealings with this regime," she said in her video statement. □

Associated Press

Police smash European cocaine 'super cartel,' arrest 49

By SAMUEL PETREQUIN
Associated Press
BRUSSELS (AP) — Law enforcement authorities in six different countries have

joined forces to take down a "super cartel" of drugs traffickers controlling about one third of the cocaine trade in Europe, the Euro-

pean Union crime agency said on Monday. Europol said 49 suspects have been arrested during the investigation, with the latest series of raids across Europe and the United Arab Emirates taking place between Nov. 8-19. The agency said police forces involved in "Operation Desert Light" targeted both the "command-and-control center and the logistical drugs trafficking infrastructure in Europe." Over 30 metric tons (33 tons) of drugs were seized during the investigations run in Spain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the UAE with the support of Europol. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration

also played a role in bringing down the organization, which was also involved in money laundering, Europol said. "The scale of cocaine importation into Europe under the suspects' control and command was massive," Europol said, adding that the suspects used encrypted communications to organize drugs shipments. The Netherlands was the country where most of the arrests were made, with 14 suspects arrested in 2021. Europol said six "high-value targets" were arrested in Dubai. Dutch authorities said one of the suspects arrested in Dubai allegedly imported thousands of kilos of cocaine into the Neth-

erlands in 2020 and 2021. The 37-year-old man with both Dutch and Moroccan nationality is also being prosecuted for laundering large amounts of money and possession of firearms. Police started investigating him after investigators cracked the encrypted messaging service Sky ECC, which is popular with criminals. A 40-year-old Dutch-Bosnian citizen was also arrested in Dubai following an investigation based on intercepted Sky messages, according to Dutch police. He is suspected of importing into Europe cocaine and raw materials for the production of amphetamines. □



This Wednesday, Oct. 10, 2018, file photo shows the sun bouncing off the Europol headquarters in The Hague, Netherlands.
Associated Press

Elliott Loonstra receives Perseverance Award in Para-Taekwondo as distinguished athlete

ORANJESTAD – Recently took place the awards ceremony to organizations and individuals with limitations who are doing good work in Aruba.

In a good atmosphere, the organization Joel Films was recognized for motivating and stimulating the Aruban youth through different projects. Also, young adult Elliott Loonstra of Para-Taekwondo received an award for his great international performance.



The Perseverance Awards are for those who persevere in life.

The ceremony took place at The Pancake House with

a very good atmosphere. The awards are sure to continue motivating our own people, who do go through difficulties and obstacles, however, continue pushing to achieve their goals. Perseverance Awards thanks each sponsor that cooperated to take the first

step of the awards.

On the pictures: (1) Model Caroline Stevens of The Pancake House together with Elliott Loonstra and Inga Rustveld, representative of Joel Films. (2) Elliott Loonstra together with his parents. □

Walk for Integrity will take place on 9 December at the National Park Arikok

ORANJESTAD – The ministry of Transport, Integrity, Nature and Senior Affairs is busy organizing a walk to commemorate the week of integrity, which will take place from the 5th until the 9th of December 2022.

In connection with the Week of Integrity, through a press release of the ministry of Integrity the local community was informed that, in collaboration with the Aruba National Park Foundation, the community is invited to take part in the Walk for Integrity, Walk

for Nature, which will take place on the 9th of December.

Participants need to be present at the site at 4:30pm, and the walk itself will begin at 5pm at the FPNA Visitor Center. The route will be from the Visitor Center to the Cunucu House and back, which is a total walk of 3 kilometers. Registration is already open on the website www.integrityweekaruba.org or through the Facebook page of Minister Ursell Arends, of the ministry of In-

tegrity. Participation is free and includes a dry-fit T-shirt.

"Integrity is present in every aspect of our lives", the press release indicates. "Integrity applies to nature as well. It is our duty to respect and coexist with nature. Let's honor our commitment with integrity, honor nature and join this walk."

In recent weeks, Bureau Integrity Aruba has received attention in the news due to its reactivation. Back in October, the government was looking to fill two im-



portant positions among public employees, as vertrouwenspersoon integriteit (VPI, confidential advisor integrity) and interne onderzoeker (IO, internal investigator).

Integrity in the government departments is extremely important for the wellbeing of our country and our community. To achieve this in an effective way requires different instruments, with staff needing to complete training and serve as a VPI or IO. A VPI will serve

as a point of contact for the public employee that suspects a violation of integrity has taken place at work. An IO gives advice or guidance when carrying out investigations on facts related to a suspicion of a violation of integrity, and in some cases will carry out the investigation on their own.

According to the press release, both roles will contribute to an integral government apparatus and a safe working environment. □

Lecture 'Boundless Slavery and Freedom in the Caribbean' Dr. Coen van Galen from Radboud University

ORANJESTAD - Recently, the University of Aruba, the Comision Conscientisacion Sclavitud, and the Ministry of Finance and Culture organized an informative evening where Dr. Coen van Galen of Radboud University Nijmegen gave a lecture titled "Boundless Slavery and Freedom in the Caribbean."

In a room filled with interested people, Dr. Van Galen explained the project to link the archives of the Caribbean islands to gather more information about the migration of persons after the abolition of slavery in the Caribbean.

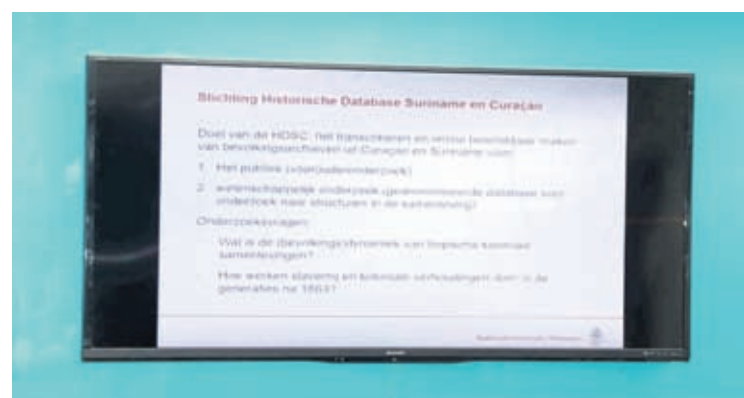


Aruba has made considerable progress in digitizing and making available historical documents. By connecting archives, it will be possible to gain more insight into inter-island ties and connections between the islands and the Caribbean region.

It will benefit scholars and anyone who wants to know more about ancestors from other islands.

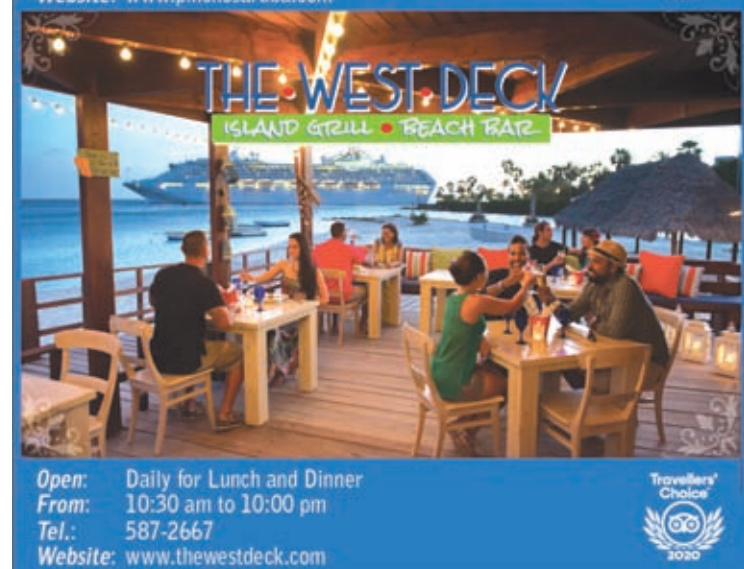
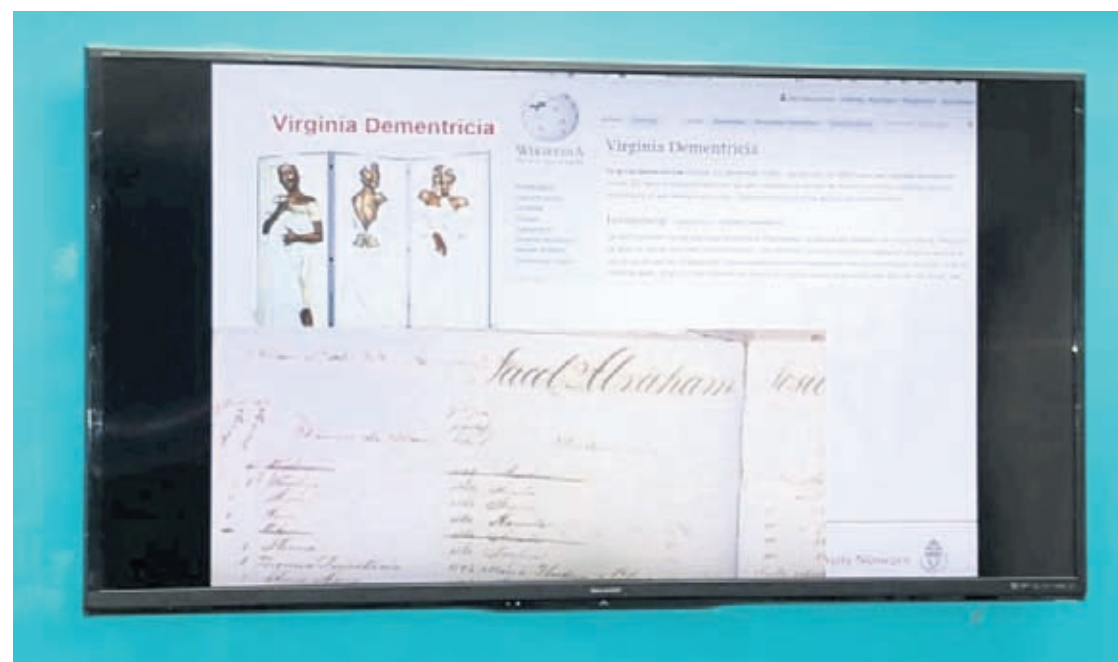
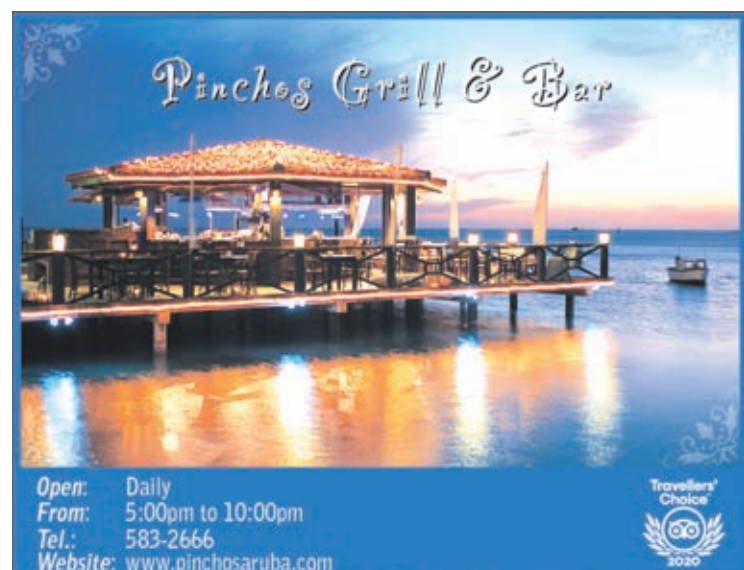
This information is also essential for research on the social structure after the abolition of slavery. It allows for better understanding of the effect of slavery, and colonialism on the generations after the abolition of slavery, and until now.

Minister Xiomara Maduro thanks Dr. Van Galen for the extensive lecture and interest in connecting Aruba to the international network. □



Mr. Van Galen explained that archives and a transnational network exist between Suriname and Curacao. Currently, they are in the process of connecting Aruba to this network as well.

Dr. Van Galen explained the setup of the international archives project Historical Database Suriname and Curacao. Discussions are currently taking place to include the National Archives of Aruba in that project. Especially now that



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ATSA and CHTA welcomed the Education Foundation Training opening day, Saturday



Eagle Beach. -- ATSA and CHTA launched a Caribbean Supercharged Service Program on Saturday. The program is under the direction of CHTA's Education Foundation

More than 330 Tourism Professionals signed up for the yearend program, and Luigi Heredia, President, Aruba Timeshare Association, had the distinct pleasure to open it officially on Saturday.

ATSA will be running this program for 3 weeks with a record number of registrations, some participants are taking 2 sessions. The training program offers four curriculums in total, Food

& Beverage, Food & Beverage Advance, Food & Beverage Supervisor and Housekeeping. The program will be concluding with great fanfare, December 14th, celebrating all hospitality participants who took part and earned a graduation certificate. The ceremony will unfold at the Marriott Aruba Resort and Stellaris Casino.

More than 30 local companies responded positively to the announcement that the Education Foundation is heading to Aruba, as well as individuals across the spectrum of the Aruba tourism product. Participants are members of ATSA



AHATA, AF&BA, and VRPA, they share the belief that work team must be developed and learning is an ongoing journey.

The Education Foundation trainers Louise & Suzanne were excited to be back, hosting the program with the tremendous conference team at La Cabana Beach Resort & Spa. La Cabana is generously supporting this training initiative, kudos and thanks to them.

Presented by Aruba Timeshare Association, delivering partners, Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association Education Foundation,

endorsed by AHATA, supporting partners, the Aruba Tourism Authority, Sunset car rentals, Interval Int'l, La

Cabana Beach Resort and Casino in Casa Del Mar Resort. □



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For Directions

The CBA maintains the reserve requirement at 24.0 percent as of November 1, 2022

In line with the Monetary Policy Committee's (MPC) task to evaluate, determine, and provide transparency on the monetary policy actions of the Central Bank of Aruba (CBA), the CBA communicates the following. During its meeting on October 12, 2022, the MPC decided to keep the reserve requirement at 24.0 percent as of November 1, 2022. Accordingly, commercial banks must hold a minimum balance at the CBA equal to 24.0 percent of their clients' short-term deposits. The decision to maintain the reserve requirement at 24.0 percent was based mainly on the downward trend in the commercial banks' excess liquidity, as well as the persisting adequate level of foreign exchange reserves.

The MPC considered the following information and analysis during its deliberation:

International and official reserves

The international reserves, comprising the official reserves of the CBA and foreign reserves held by the commercial banks, widened by Afl. 140.3 million (Graph 1) on September 23, 2022, compared to end-December 2021. Official reserves rose by Afl. 64.6 million, while the foreign reserves held by the commercial banks grew by Afl. 75.7 million. Consequently, on September 23, 2022, the official and international reserves stood at Afl. 2,809.5 million and Afl. 3,269.9 million, respectively. For the rest of 2022, the CBA expects strengthened official and international reserves due to increased foreign exchange inflows from tourism and a pick-up in foreign direct investments.

Maintaining reserve adequacy is critical to keeping the fixed exchange rate between the Aruban florin and the US dollar. To this end, the CBA anticipates international reserves to remain comfortably above the minimum required three months of current account payments. The latter consisting of, among others, consist of import payments, interest payments made to investors, and foreign transfers such as money remittances by foreign workers. Official reserves are forecasted to stay within an adequate range when benchmarked against the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) Assessing Reserve Adequacy (ARA) metric (Table 1).

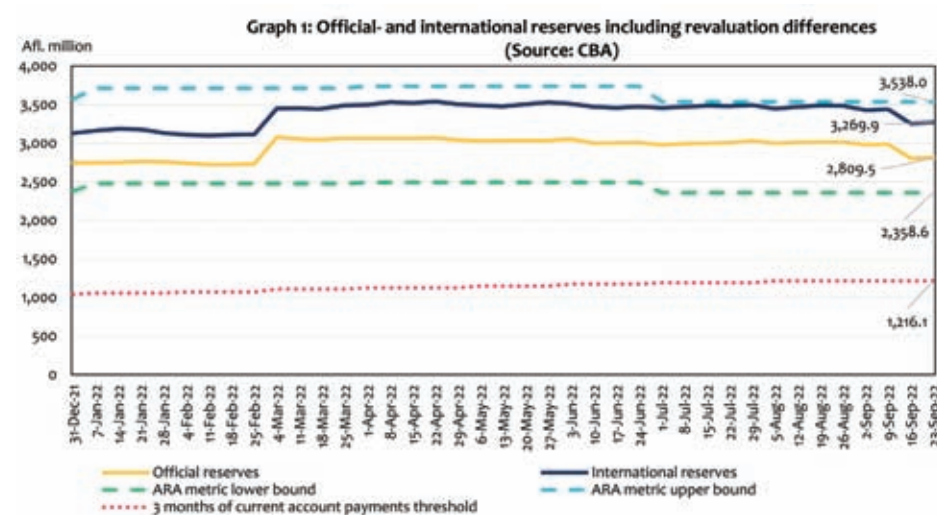


Table 1: Foreign exchange reserve benchmarks monitored in 2022

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug
Current account coverage ratio ¹	8.8	8.7	9.4	9.3	9.2	8.8	8.8	8.4
IMF ARA Metric ²	110.9	110.2	123.7	120.9	121.4	118.8	127.8	126.1

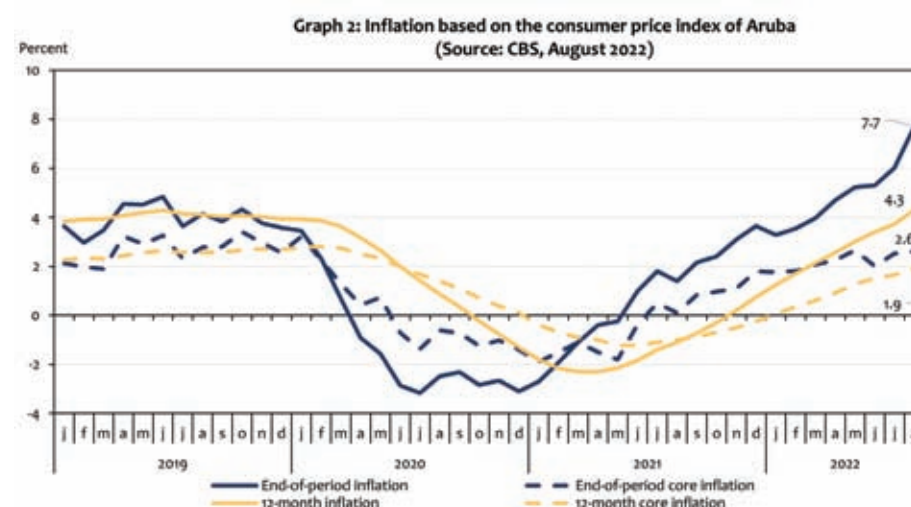
¹ The number of months of current account payments covered by the international reserves.

² The ratio between the level of official reserves and the minimum adequate level (following IMF), in percent.

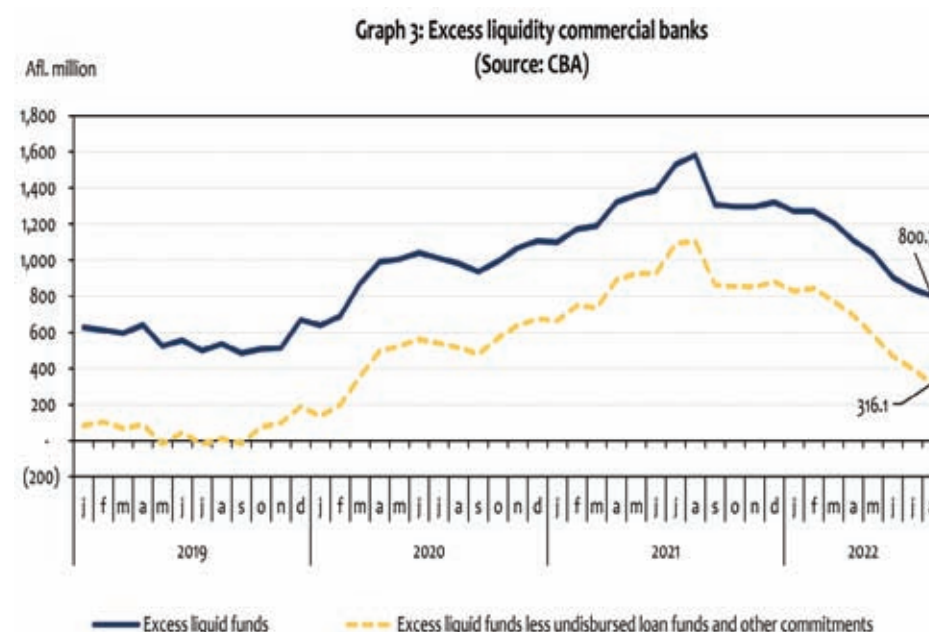
Inflation

In August 2022, the consumer price index (CPI) rose by 7.7 percent compared to the same month a year earlier (Graph 2). Compared to a year earlier, the jump in the CPI was caused by higher utility prices, which affected the 'housing' component (2.6 percentage points contribution). Moreover, a surge in gasoline prices influenced the 'transport' component (2.4 percentage points contribution). Other notable increases were recorded in the categories 'food and non-alcoholic beverages' (1.3 percentage points contribution), and 'household operations' (0.8 percentage point contribution).

The 12-month average inflation climbed to 4.3 percent, and the CBA expects increasing inflationary pressures for the remainder of 2022. This expectation follows from the elevated oil price on international markets, as well as the recent hikes in utility tariffs. Furthermore, the expectation is that Aruba will import much of the soaring prices from its export partners, particularly the United States and Europe.



Meanwhile, in August 2022, core inflation (excluding energy and food) reached 2.6 percent on a year-over-year basis. The year-over-year core inflation was driven mainly by the 'transport' (1.0 percentage point contribution) and 'household operations' (0.8 percentage point contribution) components. On a twelve-month average basis, core inflation amounted to 1.9 percent.



Commercial bank excess liquidity

Aggregated excess liquidity fell from Afl. 1,320.5 million in December 2021 to Afl. 800.7 million in August 2022 (Graph 3). This drop in excess liquidity was principally due to the consecutive hikes in the reserve requirement from January 2022 to July 2022. In August 2022, excess liquidity contracted further. Nevertheless, excess liquidity remained above the pre-pandemic levels of February 2020 (+Afl. 111.6 million). The heightened level of excess liquidity results from ample liquid deposits at commercial banks, exacerbated by the subdued credit expansion. Ample liquid deposits likely relate to the recovery in the tourism sector. However, the expectation is that the Government of Aruba will finance its budgeting deficit locally. In addition, loans related to the hotel sector will probably pick up in the remainder of 2022. Both circumstances entail a downward pressure on the commercial banks' excess liquidity.

University of Aruba dresses in purple against gender-based violence

ORANJESTAD – The University of Aruba together with the Foundation Against Relational Violence showcased the theatre play 'Stop the Beating' with the goal of informing the community and creating awareness regarding child abuse.

The play 'Stop the Beating' has a goal of breaking the silence and starting a more open conversation on the topic of child abuse. Normally a theatre play in this form will be more focused on showing the story of the victim, however, in this case emphasis is also put on understanding the story of the aggressor and understanding the pattern of child abuse. The organizers believe profoundly that art



can educate and create awareness in the community of Aruba in order to end

the taboo regarding child abuse on our island.

The play was created by Archell Thompson and Jet-tie Medema. It stars Sophie Noguera, only 17 years old. This project was executed to commemorate International Children's Day, but also the International Day Against Gender-Based Violence, in collaboration with the department of the Social Work & Development study at the University of Aruba.

Janice Tromp, senior student in Social Work & Development at the University of Aruba explained to our reporter that the department came with this initiative to bring awareness at the university, so that other students can also know what violence means. "Because it is a topic of which we don't speak too much in Aruba, it is something that is behind closed doors. Basically we are breaking this stigma regarding domestic abuse."

As social workers, they stand for the people who cannot use their voices. Many times, victims are afraid of speaking and come forward because of the thoughts and opinions of others. "From our side, we advocate for this group so that they can feel empowered and depend on us. This is basically the reason why we came up with this activity", Tromp pointed out.

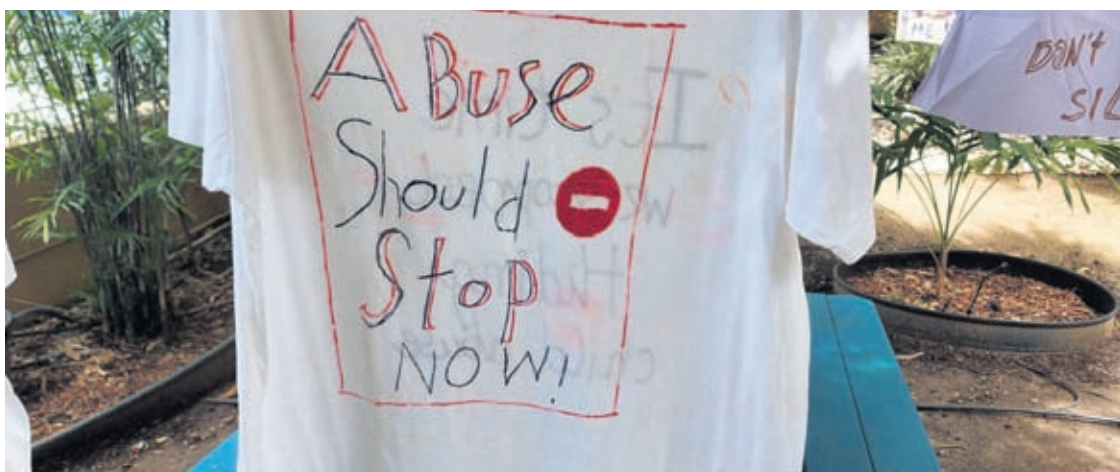
Aside from the play, there was also a T-shirt exhibition at the entrance of the university that represented the story of each victim of gender-based violence. "Each T-shirt has a different message. We have some that are from adults but also from children, with messages that the victim can express. For example, one says 'not allowed to touch', which represents maybe sexual or physical abuse. This way we highlight what is happening", Tromp said.

Sasha Geerman, of the Department of Social Affairs was present during this activity to give support to the students at the University of Aruba, and she explained that they joined forces with the Foundation Against Relational Violence on the international day against all forms of violence against women and girls. They also joined the campaign of 16 days of activism worldwide, which will end on the 10th of December with the International Day of Human Rights.

Also available was a QR code for people to do a self-test regarding violence, but also on how the person feels. After the play, they had an open dialogue with those presents on themes regarding family law, violence within the family, and toxic masculinity in Aruba.

As a worker in the Department of Social Affairs, Geerman mentioned that this is a topic that they confront, and they have a section of social workers and couple and family therapists. A few days ago, precisely, they were mentioning how in many cases that present involving couples, there is one or more degrees of violence involved – however, this doesn't mean that help is unavailable.

They see cases that received guidance and can overcome the period of violence. "This gives us the assurance that we can provide help to those who are open to receive it", Geerman finalized. □



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS
 1 Nurse, e.g.
 6 Extreme
 11 Pueblo material
 12 Stuck in the mud
 13 California golf resort
 15 Quarter-back Manning
 16 Had lunch
 17 Phone bill addition
 18 Capitol worker
 20 Fragrant tree
 21 Signing need
 22 Seedy joint
 23 TV's Philbin
 26 Spiked clubs
 27 Fencing sword
 28 "The Rise of Skywalker" heroine
 29 Light metal
 30 Accessory for the Penguin
 34 Top card
 35 — Dhobi
 36 Crude abode
 37 Tree with shiny leaves
 40 DVR option

DOWN

1 Light-house settings
 2 "Skyfall" singer
 3 Gotham City hero
 4 Flow out
 5 Feels empathy
 6 Brown shade
 7 Tell whoppers
 8 Lateness excuse, often
 9 Take in
 10 Sticks
 14 School near Windsor
 19 "... baked in —"
 22 Harry Belafonte hit
 23 Wrapped again, as an ankle
 24 Food fancier
 25 Army bigwig
 26 Computer screen sight
 28 Lounging attire
 30 Bulls and rams
 31 Low-priced
 32 Moolah
 33 One of the Kennedys
 38 Letter before
 39 Ram's mate

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H	A	T	E	S		M	I	S	E
O	M	E	N		R	A	N		
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S	E	W	S		S	P	E	N	T

Yesterday's answer

19 "... baked in —"
 22 Harry Belafonte hit
 23 Wrapped again, as an ankle
 24 Food fancier
 25 Army bigwig
 26 Computer screen sight
 28 Lounging attire
 30 Bulls and rams
 31 Low-priced
 32 Moolah
 33 One of the Kennedys
 38 Letter before
 39 Ram's mate

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1					12				
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34				35			36		
37			38				39		
40					41				
42					43				

11-29

AXYDIBAAXR
 is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

11-29

CRYPTOQUOTE

ACBQGU "GCFV" VYIGZV VY
 SOQH ZQVO. Q FXRERX AY
 SCHH AORL "OYXQNYGACH

HQER FCIVRV. "IGBGYTG
 Yesterday's Cryptoquote: HAVE YOU SEEN MY HEART, SOMEWHERE IN YOUR CASTLE OF YELLOW LEAVES? — A WALTZ FOR ZIZI, "LETTER TO NOVEMBER"

Cyber Monday deals lure in consumers amid high inflation

By HALELUYA HADERO

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Days after flocking to stores on Black Friday, consumers are turning online for Cyber Monday to score more discounts on gifts and other items that have ballooned in price because of high inflation.

Cyber Monday is expected to remain the year's biggest online shopping day and rake in up to \$11.6 billion in sales, according to Adobe Analytics, which tracks transactions at over 85 of the top 100 U.S. online stores. That forecast represents a jump from the \$10.7 billion consumers spent last year.

Adobe's numbers are not adjusted for inflation, but the company says demand is growing even when inflation is factored in. Some analysts have said top line numbers will be boosted by higher prices and the amount of items consumers purchase could remain unchanged or even fall compared to prior years. Profit margins are also expected to be tight for retailers offering deeper discounts to attract budget-conscious consumers and clear out their bloated inventories.

Shoppers spent a record \$9.12 billion online on Black Friday, up 2.3% from last year, according to Adobe. E-commerce activity continued to be strong over the weekend, with \$9.55 billion in online sales.

Salesforce, which also tracks spending, said their estimates showed online sales in the U.S. hit \$15 billion on Friday and \$17.2 billion over the weekend, with an average discount rate of 30% on products.



In this Dec. 12, 2016, photo, a person searches the internet for sales, in Miami.

Associated Press

Electronics, active wear, toys and health and beauty items were among those that provided a big boost, the two groups said.

Meanwhile, consumers who feared leaving their homes and embraced e-commerce during the pandemic are heading back to physical stores in greater numbers this year as normalcy returns. The National Retail Federation said its recent survey showed a 3% uptick in the number of Black Friday shoppers planning to go to stores. It expects 63.9 million consumers to shop online during Cyber Monday, compared to 77 million last year.

CONSUMERS ARE SPENDING CAUTIOUSLY

Mastercard SpendingPulse, which tracks spending across all types of payments including cash and credit card, said that overall sales on Black Friday rose 12% from the year-ago. Sales at physical stores rose 12%, while online sales were up 14%.

RetailNext, which captures sales and traffic via sensors, reported that store traffic rose 7% on Black Friday, while sales at physi-

cal stores improved 0.1% from a year ago. However, spending per customer dropped nearly 7% as cautious shoppers did more browsing than buying. Another company that tracks store traffic, Sensormatic Solutions said store traffic was up 2.9% on Black Friday compared to a year ago.

"Shoppers are being more thoughtful, but they are going to more than a few retailers to be able to make a determination of what they are going to buy this year," said Brian Field, Sensormatic's global leader of retail consulting and analytics.

Overall, online spending has remained resilient in the past few weeks as eager shoppers buy more items on credit and embrace "buy now, pay later" services that lack interest charges but carry late fees. In the first three weeks of November, online sales were essentially flat compared with last year, according to Adobe.

It said the modest uptick shows consumers have a strong appetite for holiday shopping amid uncertainty about the economy.

Still, some major retailers are feeling a shift. Target, Macy's and Kohl's said this month they've seen a slowdown in consumer spending in the past few weeks. The exception was Walmart, which reported higher sales in its third quarter and raised its earnings outlook. □

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24/7

WHO renames monkeypox as mpox, citing racism concerns

LONDON (AP) — The World Health Organization has renamed monkeypox as mpox, citing concerns the original name of the decades-old animal disease could be construed as discriminatory and racist.

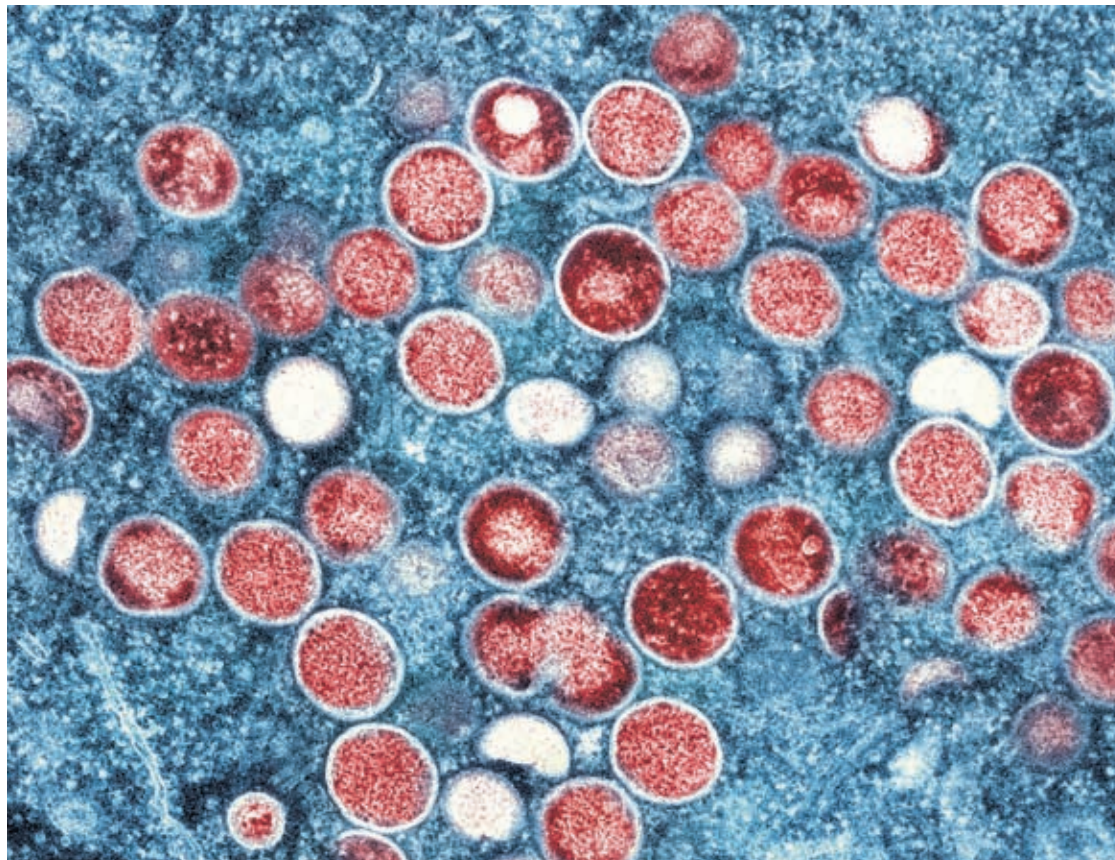
The U.N. health agency said in a statement Monday that mpox was its new preferred name for monkeypox, saying that both monkeypox and mpox would be used for the next year while the old name is phased out.

WHO said it was concerned by the "racist and stigmatizing language" that arose after monkeypox spread to more than 100 countries. It said numerous individuals and countries asked the organization "to propose a way forward to change the name."

In August, WHO began consulting experts about renaming the disease, shortly after the U.N. agency declared monkeypox's spread to be a global emergency.

To date, there have been more than 80,000 cases identified in dozens of countries that had not previously reported the smallpox-related disease. Until May, monkeypox, a disease that is thought to originate in animals, was not known to trigger large outbreaks beyond central and west Africa.

Outside of Africa, nearly all cases have been in gay, bisexual or other men who have sex with men. Scientists believe monkeypox triggered outbreaks in Western countries after spreading via sex at two raves in Belgium and Spain. Vaccination efforts in rich countries, along with targeted control interventions, have mostly brought



This image provided by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) shows a colorized transmission electron micrograph of monkeypox particles (red) found within an infected cell (blue), cultured in the laboratory that was captured and color-enhanced at the NIAID Integrated Research Facility (IRF) in Fort Detrick, Md.

the disease under control after it peaked in the summer.

In Africa, the disease mainly affects people in contact with infected animals such as rodents and squirrels. The majority of monkeypox-related deaths have been in Africa, where there have been almost no vaccines available.

U.S. health officials have warned it may be impossible to eliminate the disease

there, warning it could be a continuing threat mainly for gay and bisexual men for years to come.

Mpox was first named monkeypox in 1958 when research monkeys in Denmark were observed to have a "pox-like" disease, although they are not thought to be the disease's animal reservoir.

Although WHO has named numerous new diseases shortly after they emerged,

including Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS and COVID-19, this appears to be the first time the agency has attempted to rechristen a disease decades after it was first named. □

Associated Press



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The Righting deciphers conservative media for outsiders

By DAVID BAUDER

AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Nearly six years into monitoring the content of conservative media outlets for his website and newsletter The Righting, Howard Polskin hasn't lost the capacity for surprise.

Case in point: when Donald Trump announced his 2024 presidential candidacy, and many of his long-time media allies let fly with anger and insults. Two impeachments, two years of election denials and a U.S. Capitol riot didn't have the impact of a disappointing showing by Republicans in the midterm elections.

"I didn't expect the level of vitriol, there's no question about it," he said.

Trump's inauguration in 2017 started Polskin on his journey. A New York-based former reporter and publicist for the likes of CNN and J.K. Rowling, Polskin was mystified at why his fellow Americans had elected Trump, and sought explanations.

He began studying outlets popular with conservatives and sending links to fellow left-leaning friends who wouldn't think of clicking



Howard Polskin, founder of the free five-year-old newsletter TheRighting, poses at his home office in New York on Nov. 23, 2022.

on the Washington Free Beacon, the Epoch Times, PJ Media or Chicks on the Right. "I didn't start it as a business," he said. "I started it for myself."

It has grown into a newsletter with subscribers that number nearly 10,000 and a website.

Polskin, with a former Newsweek editor and freelance

writers, does original reporting on people behind the outlets and coverage trends like the targeting of transgender rights and how powerful women of color are disparaged. He's produced an "A-Z Guide to Right Wing Media" with 130 entries. The Righting also follows which sites are gaining and losing popularity in

an industry fully dominated by FoxNews.com.

Polskin is impatient for more people who are not enmeshed in conservative media to read what he's compiling. He received an important endorsement when California Gov. Gavin Newsom said in September that he reads The Righting each morning.

Associated Press

Newsom told Politico that it gave him "a different appreciation and a different understanding of the ruthlessness of the right."

People who are not fans don't appreciate the breadth of the conservative media ecosystem, and how it has spread beyond radio and websites into podcasting, publishing and YouTube channels, Polskin said. The left doesn't come anywhere close.

He's not switched sides, but Polskin admits his work has pushed him more toward the political center. He's grown to appreciate the talents of certain writers, like Townhall columnist Kurt Schlichter, a lawyer and former stand-up comic, and Ray Cardello, a blogger from New Hampshire. "Prior to The Righting, I never went to these sites and it has opened my mind to a different way of thinking," he said. "While I might not agree with it all the time, I get the underlying philosophy."

He worries about the sites succeeding in painting Democrats as having views on the fringe and making them unpalatable to many Americans. □

Jon Batiste to sing for Macron at Biden's 1st state dinner

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE

Associated Press

NANTUCKET, Mass. (AP) — Musician Jon Batiste is on tap to perform at President Joe Biden's first White House state dinner on Thursday that will highlight long-

standing ties between the United States and France and honor President Emmanuel Macron.

"An artist who transcends generations, Jon Batiste's music inspires and brings people together,"

said Vanessa Valdivia, a spokesperson for first lady Jill Biden, whose office is overseeing dinner preparations.

"We're thrilled to have him perform at the White House for the first state dinner of the Biden-Harris administration," Valdivia said.

The black-tie dinner for Macron will be part of what is shaping up to be a busy social season at the White House.

The Bidens' granddaughter Naomi was married on the South Lawn earlier this month. And first lady Jill Biden was set on Monday to unveil the White House decorations that will be viewed by thousands of holiday visitors over the next month.

Reporters returning to the White House on Sunday

with the president saw large wreaths studded with shiny Christmas tree ornaments and red bows suspended from the south side of the White House. Wreaths also were hung on the Pennsylvania Avenue side of the building. White lights were draped over the shrubs and other landscaping on the South Lawn. A Christmas tree could be seen through the windows of the Oval Office.

Batiste will be adding White House entertainer to an already long list of roles, including recording artist, bandleader, musical director, film composer, museum creative director and scion of New Orleans musical royalty.

He won five Grammy Awards this year, including for album of the year

for "We Are." During the awards show in April, Batiste ended his dance-filled performance of "Freedom" by jumping up on Billie Eilish's table.

Batiste, 36, most recently was bandleader and musical director of "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," leaving the broadcast after a seven-year run. Batiste composed music, consulted on and arranged songs for Pixar's animated film "Soul." He won a Golden Globe for the music alongside Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross of Nine Inch Nails.

The trio also earned the Academy Award for best original score. For their work on "Soul," Batiste, Reznor and Ross won the Grammy for best score soundtrack for visual media. □



Jon Batiste attends the TIME100 Gala celebrating the 100 most influential people in the world at Frederick P. Rose Hall, Jazz at Lincoln Center on June 8, 2022, in New York.

Associated Press

Brazil advances at World Cup with 1-0 win over Switzerland

By TALES AZZONI

AP Sports Writer

DOHA, Qatar (AP) — Struggling and unconvincing without Neymar on the field, Brazil still played well enough to secure a spot in the next round of the World Cup.

The five-time champions overcame the absence of their injured star to beat Switzerland 1-0 with a late goal Monday and make it to the round of 16 with a match to spare in Group G. "Of course we miss a player like Neymar," Brazil coach Tite said. "The team loses a lot without him. But we also have other players who can get the job done, as we saw it today."

Defensive midfielder Casemiro got the only goal in the 83rd minute of a game in which Brazil had difficulties creating scoring chances without its main playmaker.

The Real Madrid player scored with a one-timer into the far corner, using the outside of his right foot for a shot that deflected slightly off defender Manuel Akanji.

"We knew that it wasn't going to be easy. We had to be patient," Casemiro said. "Our first objective



Brazil's Casemiro celebrates after scoring his side's opening goal during the World Cup group G soccer match between Brazil and Switzerland, at the Stadium 974 in Doha, Qatar, Monday, Nov. 28, 2022.

Associated Press

was to advance and we achieved that."

Neymar stayed at the team's hotel to treat a right ankle injury sustained in the opener in Qatar. He posted an Instagram story showing him watching the match on television while undergoing treatment on his foot.

"Casemiro has been the best defensive midfielder in the world for a long time," Neymar wrote on Twitter.

Team doctors have not yet given a timetable for Neymar's return or said if he will return at all.

"We know that Neymar is a great player and that he makes a difference," Brazil

defender Marquinhos said. "In difficult moments he takes on the responsibility and creates the opportunities, but we showed once again that we have quality players to make up for his absence." Switzerland, which had no attempts on target, needs a win in the last match against Serbia to guarantee its spot in the next stage. A draw may be enough depending on the match between Brazil and Cameroon.

The result extended Brazil's unbeaten run in the group stage to 17 matches, with 14 wins and three draws. It has lost only one of its last

29 group games, with the last defeat coming against Norway in 1998 in France. Switzerland had lost only two of its last 13 group matches at the World Cup. "I can't really blame the team, it did a good job for quite some time," Switzerland coach Murat Yakin said through a translator. "I don't think it's a disappointment. We have a lot of good takeaways here. The next game is something we have control over."

It was an even match early on, with both teams trying to control the game but not creating many significant chances. Without Neymar, Brazil struggled to get near Switzerland's area until Casemiro's goal. The assists came from Vinícius Júnior and Rodrygo, the Real Madrid players who until recent had Casemiro as their teammate. Casemiro now plays for Manchester United. Tite replaced Neymar with Fred, Casemiro's teammate at Man United, freeing up Lucas Paquetá to play closer to the attack. Éder Militão, who plays as a central defender at Real Madrid, came in for Danilo in the right back position, instead of veteran Danilo Alves. □

**FIFA WORLD CUP
Qatar 2022**

Group G		G	
	0 - 0		nov 28
	1 - 0		nov 28
CAM		SER	
BRA		SUI	

Group H		H	
	2 - 3		nov 28
	2 - 0		nov 28
KOR		GHA	
POR		URU	

Group A		A	
	- -		nov 29
	- -		nov 29
	- -		nov 29
NED		QAT	

Group B		B	
	- -		nov 29
	- -		nov 29
	- -		nov 29
ENG		ENG	

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Jones, Maddux, Morris consider Bonds, Clemens for Hall

COOPERSTOWN, N.Y. (AP)

— Hall of Famers Chipper Jones, Greg Maddux, Jack Morris and Ryne Sandberg are among 16 members of the contemporary baseball era committee that will meet Sunday to consider the Cooperstown fate of an eight-man ballot that includes Barry Bonds, Roger Clemens and Rafael Palmeiro.

Hall of Famers Lee Smith, Frank Thomas and Alan Trammell also are on the panel, which will meet in San Diego ahead of the winter meetings.

They will be joined by former Toronto CEO Paul Beeston, former Boston Red Sox and Chicago Cubs executive Theo Epstein, Anaheim Angels owner Arte Moreno, Miami Marlins general manager Kim Ng,

Minnesota Twins president Dave St. Peter and Chicago White Sox executive vice president Ken Williams. Three media members/historians are on the committee: longtime statistical analyst Steve Hirdt of Stats Perform, La Velle E. Neal III of the Minneapolis Star Tribune and Susan Slusser of the San Francisco Chronicle. Neal and Slusser are past presidents of the Baseball Writers' Association of America.

Hall Chairman Jane Forbes Clark will be the committee's non-voting chair.

The ballot also includes Albert Belle, Don Mattingly, Fred McGriff, Dale Murphy and Curt Schilling. The committee considers candidates whose careers were primarily from 1980 on. A candidate needs 75%

to be elected and anyone who does will be inducted on July 23, along with anyone chosen in the BBWAA vote, announced on Jan. 24.

Bonds, Clemens and Schilling fell short in January in their 10th and final appearances on the BBWAA ballot. Bonds received 260 of 394 votes (66%), Clemens 257 (65.2%) and Schilling 231 (58.6%).

Palmeiro was dropped from the BBWAA ballot after receiving 25 votes (4.4%) in his fourth appearance in 2014, falling below the 5% minimum needed to stay on. His high was 72 votes (12.6%) in 2012.

Palmeiro was suspended for 10 days in August 2005 following a positive test under the major league drug program, just over



Former San Francisco Giants slugger Barry Bonds attends an NBA basketball game between the Portland Trail Blazers and Sacramento Kings in Sacramento, Calif., Wednesday, Oct. 19, 2022.

Associated Press

two weeks after getting his 3,000th hit.

A seven-time NL MVP, Bonds set the career home run record with 762 and the season record with 73 in 2001.

A seven-time Cy Young Award winner, Clemens went 354-184 with a 3.12 ERA and 4,672 strikeouts, third behind Nolan Ryan (5,714) and Randy Johnson (4,875). □

Analysis: Aggressive coaching paid off Sunday in NFL

By **ROB MAADDI**
AP Pro Football Writer

With the ball in Tom Brady's hands, Todd Bowles played it safe and lost. Doug Pederson and Brandon Staley went for broke and celebrated wins.

Aggressive coaching paid off Sunday.

The Tampa Bay Buccaneers lost 23-17 at Cleveland in overtime in a game that Brady had a chance to win in regulation with another one of his vintage drives in the final minute. His coach didn't trust the GOAT to make it happen. Bowles didn't call a timeout and chose to play for overtime. It backfired.

Pederson and Staley avoided OT and went for 2-point conversions. It worked.

The Jacksonville Jaguars upset Baltimore when Pederson decided to go for a 2-pointer after Trevor Lawrence tossed a 10-yard touchdown pass to Marvin Jones with 14 seconds left to pull within a point. Lawrence connected with Zay Jones on the conversion and the Jaguars beat the Ravens 28-27.

The same scenario unfolded later in Arizona when Justin Herbert threw a 1-yard TD pass to Austin Ekeler with 15 seconds remaining to get the Chargers within a point. Herbert



Tampa Bay Buccaneers coach Todd Bowles, left, talks with line judge Mark Stewart during the second half of the team's NFL football game against the Cleveland Browns in Cleveland, Sunday, Nov. 27, 2022.

Associated Press

then hit Gerald Everett for the 2-pointer to give Los Angeles a 25-24 victory over the Cardinals.

Pederson and Staley are known for making bold decisions. In Jacksonville's case, Pederson had nothing to lose because the Jaguars (4-7) are headed nowhere. The Chargers (6-5) are in the playoff chase, so Staley's call was more risky. Bowles didn't even try. Calling a timeout with Brady on the field isn't considered a gamble. It's

standard procedure when the seven-time Super Bowl champion is under center. The Buccaneers had three timeouts and the ball at their 25 with 32 seconds to go in the fourth quarter after the Browns tied the game at 17-17.

In Week 9, Brady needed just 35 seconds with all of his timeouts to drive the Buccaneers 60 yards for a comeback win against the Rams. He has led a winning drive in fourth quarter/overtime an NFL-record 55

times in the regular season and 14 more in the playoffs. This time, the Bucs needed 43 yards to give Ryan Succop an attempt at a 50-yard field goal to win.

Brady tossed a 1-yard pass to Rachaad White on first down and the Bucs could've stopped the clock with about 26 seconds to go.

Instead, Bowles let it tick, tick, tick.

After Brady fired a 26-yard completion to Julio Jones on the next play to reach

the Cleveland 48, only 8 seconds remained when the Bucs finally used their first timeout.

Following an incomplete pass, Brady could only try a Hail Mary on the final play before OT.

Fox analyst Jonathan Vilma called Bowles' decision to not use a timeout after the first play of the series "inexplicable." Bowles wasn't asked about it after the game. He was questioned about not stopping the clock when the Browns were driving for the tying TD. "No. That clock was going to run down. We didn't have enough to stop it right there," he said.

"There was overtime right there, right off the top. Once we couldn't get there, it was going to overtime." Bowles coached scared to lose. The Buccaneers are fortunate they're in the weak NFC South where 5-6 is still good enough for first place.

When Pederson was asked about going for the win, he said: "We've got to think players, not plays, and trust our guys."

Staley also trusted his team. "I really believe in our offensive football team," Staley said. "I believe in our quarterback. I believed in the play call. We executed it well all week. □"

AP source: Mavs close to deal with 4-time All-Star Walker

By **SCHUYLER DIXON**
AP Sports Writer

The Dallas Mavericks are close to a deal with four-time All-Star guard Kemba Walker, a person with knowledge of the agreement told The Associated Press on Monday.

Walker's career has been on hold because of knee injuries, but the 32-year-old could give superstar Luka Doncic some much-needed backcourt help for the struggling Mavericks.

The person spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the deal isn't finalized and is pending a physical. The deal was first reported on Substack by longtime NBA reporter

Marc Stein.

Dallas is on a season-worst four-game losing streak to drop below .500 after reaching the Western Conference finals last season.

The Mavericks lost Jalen Brunson to the New York Knicks in free agency after he flourished playing next to Doncic, and Brunson played a big role in Dal-

las winning playoff games without its three-time All-Star. The loss of Brunson also cost the Mavericks one of their two primary ball-handlers behind Doncic. Spencer Dinwiddie has had to carry most of that load this season.

The shooters around Doncic also have been struggling, with Dorian Finney-Smith, Reggie Bullock and Tim Hardaway going in and out of slumps so far.

Walker was limited to 37 games last season, his only one with the New York Knicks, because of knee issues that have been affecting him for years.

The No. 9 overall pick in 2011, Walker blossomed as

an All-Star in the last three of eight seasons with Charlotte before he signed as a free agent with Boston.

Walker played most of the pandemic-altered 2019-20 season, the last of five consecutive seasons in which he averaged at least 20 points per game.

Walker played just 43 games in his second season with the Celtics before an offseason trade to the Knicks.

The Mavericks announced they have waived guard Facundo Campazzo, a move that clears a roster spot for Walker. Campazzo played sparingly after signing the day before the season started. □



New York Knicks guard Kemba Walker (8) dribbles up the court during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the Brooklyn Nets, Wednesday, Feb. 16, 2022, in New York.

Associated Press